is very satisfactory in six. In the remaining two, corrective measures are being taken to improve capacity utilisation. Cost and time over-runs are related to specific projects and steps are being taken in each case to arrest this trend.

French Defence Minister's visit to India

1337. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be plesed to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the French Defence Minister's visit to India in December, 1988 some Defence agreements had been signed;

(b) if so, the details of the same; and

(c) if the reply to part (a) above be in the negative,what discussions took place during his stay in Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE. (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) to (c) During this visit, a consultancy agreement was signed with M/s. SOFMA of france for the Concept Design study of a sea Control ship.

Launching of Sounding Rockets from Thumba

1338. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what are the total sounding rockets launched from Thumba so far and how many pay loads were placed in sounding rockets during 1988-89 and how many of them are Indian payloads; and

(b) what in the total cost of expenditure involved in launching a Single sounding rocket?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) Total number of sounding rockets launched from Thumba upto the end of January, 1989 is 1943. This includes weekly meteorological rocket flights since December 1970, those carried out for the development of different types of sounding rockets and for conducting large number of observations for the investigation of the earth's atmosphere, ionospheric/magnetospheric phenomena and radiation emitted by galactic x-ray sources.

Total number of scientific payloads launched during 1988-89 is 98 out of which 55 payloads (including 42 payloads for measuring atmospheric winds under an equatorial wave campaign) were Indian made and 43 payloads (all for regular weekly meteorological M-100 rocket soundings) were Soviet made. Apart from the measurement of winds, the Indian payloads were launched for the measurement of the height profiles of concentrations of ozone, nitric oxide and aerosols upto about 90 km altitude and ion/electron densities and electric fields in the upper atmosphere upto about 150 km altitude.

(b) The expenditure involved in launching one single indigenous sounding rocket (including the cost of rocket and rocket instrumentation/payload) depends upon the size of the sounding rocket. The total cost including the rocket, payload, electronics and other accessaries is about Rs. 1.50 lakhs for meteorological/atmospheric sounding rockets (RH-200 type). A few rockets of RH-560 type (carry large payloads of about 100 kg reaching altitudes of 300-400 kms), however, cost about Rs. 30.00 lakhs each.

Defence Hospitals in the country

1339. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Defence Department runs a number of hospitals to take full care of the health needs of our defence services, and if so, what is the number of large defence hospitals in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Defence hospitals are equipped with some of the latest medical equipments such as surgical lasers, and if so, what is the total number